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Sgt. Robert Holmes "puzzled"
Times photos by Steve Fontana

His wife, Winnie, is trying to sell real estate, but Holmes said that has been "slow."
Untrained for anything but typing up duty rosters and other administrative office chores, Holmes said he has no idea how he will earn a living.

His plan to reenlist and then retire with a pension and full benefits two years hence came unglued last Aug. 23 when the Enlisted Performance Board at USMC Headquarters in Washington, D.C., decided he had too many fitness reports showing less than adequate performance of his duties.

Holmes requested reconsideration and got some support, including that of Maj. Gen. Kenneth Houghton, recruit depot commander, who wrote that his personal observation of the sergeant's performance "supports his retention in the corps."

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Louis H. Wilson ordered reconsideration, but the board of officers and enlisted men held firm and the commandant did not overrule them.

"No sir, I'm not exactly what you call a clean-cut, all-American kid," Holmes admitted Thursday. "But I know for a fact there's no marines on duty worse than I am."

He contended that in the five years he has been at the recruit depot, his fitness reports have been "average or above average except



Capt. T. J. Rees... superior officer

for three marginal or submarginal ones based on the opinions of one or two officers."

Holmes suggested that most of his troubles stemmed from one particular officer with whom he had a "personality conflict."

But Maj. M.L. (Buz) Hefu, public affairs officer at USMC headquarters in Washington, said the Enlisted Performance Board turned down the sergeant's reenlistment bid because of a series of marginal or submarginal fitness reports from 1968 on.

The reason Holmes' current commanding officer thinks well of him, Hefu said, is that the sergeant "shaped up in the last 18 months or so, but the board saw he had a history of marginal or submarginal performance."

In April, 1975, according to Hefu, Holmes received a letter from headquarters warning that his performance could result in the denial of further service.

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Memos Disclose CIA Evasions

Knew of Man Who Vanished, Despite Denials

BY WILLIAM ENDICOTT
Times Staff Writer

DENVER—A few weeks after Thomas Riha, associate professor of Russian history at the University of Colorado, mysteriously vanished in 1968, one of his colleagues wrote to the Denver field office of the Central Intelligence Agency asking if the agency could shed any light on Riha's disappearance.

"The response I got was no response," Dr. Stephen Fischer-Galati, director of the university's Center for Slavic and East European Studies, told The Times this week. "They said they had never heard of him. They refused to go into the matter."

As it turns out, however, the CIA knew more about Riha than it was telling.

Internal agency memorandums recently made public in a federal court case here involving the missing professor show that the CIA, on the chance it might use him as an informant, had collected "considerable information" on Riha and had intercepted letters he wrote to, and received from, the Soviet Union.

The memos also indicate that the CIA's chief concern was in keeping itself out of any news accounts of Riha's disappearance. And they detail a series of events in the Riha case which aggravated a standing feud between the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and led to a "disruption of liaison" between the two agencies.

The Riha case has surfaced again in recent months as a result of efforts by his nephew, Zdenek Cerveny, of nearby Boulder, to have him declared legally dead and was outlined in a Times story last October.

The Times reported then that a request by Cerveny to the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act last year had produced two heavily censored documents contending that Riha had been sighted in his native Czechoslovakia in late 1973.

Memorandums recently made pub-

lic were produced later as a result of a suit filed by Cerveny attempting to learn the identity of the person or persons who reportedly saw his uncle, and although the memorandums shed no light on those identities they offer a rare insight into the machinations of the intelligence community.

Most of the memos were written by Michael M. Todorovich to his superiors in Washington. Todorovich was then chief of the CIA's Denver field office and is now retired and living in Denver.

Contacted by The Times this week, Todorovich indicated some bitterness over the memos being made public but refused to comment further. "I'm not discussing the case whatsoever," he said. "I don't say anything that can be misconstrued."

His successor, James Sommerville, did not return a telephone call that was made to him in an effort to elicit comment.

Two days after Fischer-Galati wrote to the agency and was told it had never heard of Riha, Todorovich sent his first memo to Washington on the case, noting:

"Riha first came to our attention in the fall of 1968 when we made inquiries locally for U.S. citizens who might have been caught in Czechoslovakia at the time of the Soviet occupation."

"We made several attempts to contact him, but never succeeded in doing so."

"Also, the CU (Colorado University) history department is a rather touchy group. Since we could get no sure indication from his colleagues that he would be receptive to a CIA approach we finally let the matter drop."

In fact, it appears CIA headquarters in Washington was not telling Todorovich everything because, as testimony before a congressional investigating committee later revealed, the agency as early as 1958 had considered using Riha as an intelligence source—while he was an exchange student at the University of Moscow.

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L.A. WILL SEEK \$126 MILLION FOR PEOPLE MOVER

BY RAY HEBERT
Times Urban Affairs Writer

The Los Angeles City Council decided Thursday to seek \$126.3 million in federal transit and highway funds to help build an automated downtown people-mover system.

Over objections by a bloc of San Fernando Valley councilmen, the council voted 9 to 3 to file a formal application to get work started on the \$165.4 million, 2.67-mile demonstration project from Union Station to the Los Angeles Convention Center.

The Los Angeles people-mover program is one of five selected by the federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration in a nationwide competition to test the feasibility of driverless transit systems to relieve vehicular and pedestrian congestion in downtown centers.

Although UMTA has promised to

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U.S. Commission Accuses Caltech of Hiring Bias

BY LEE AUSTIN
Times Staff Writer

The federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission has charged Caltech with discriminatory practices against women and blacks in the employment of faculty members, it was learned Thursday.

The commission's findings and charges, which have been sent to officials of the prestigious institution of scientific study in Pasadena, say women comprise only a small percentage of the faculty, their pay is much less than men and black persons have been almost totally excluded from the faculty ranks, according to informed sources.

And, informants say, the EEOC report includes a warning that unless the situation is resolved, court action could follow.

Caltech officials refused to discuss the case. Said Dr. Robert Christy, Caltech acting president and provost, "We have not been releasing any information. We choose to regard it as confidential."

The EEOC investigation stems from a complaint filed with the commission by Dr. Jenjoy LaBelle, an assistant professor of literature at Caltech who was dismissed a year ago

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Brown Will Seek Speedy Approval of LNG Facility

32 Part I—Feb. 11, 1977—Los Angeles Times

Agent's Memos Outline CIA Evasions

Continued from Third Page

However, there is no evidence on the record to indicate that Riha ever worked for the CIA, although his nephew and Fischer-Galati are convinced he was involved with one or more intelligence agencies. But they have no proof.

The day after his first memo to Washington, Todorovich sent another one indicating that a CIA contact in the Boulder area had called with word that Joseph B. Smiley, then president of the university, was "somewhat perturbed" over Riha's strange disappearance.

Todorovich said he had advised the contact to tell Smiley "that we certainly had no knowledge of Thomas Riha, nor had we in any way been involved with the gentleman." He also said he had called the FBI and had been told that in its opinion "Riha was in a safe haven."

The CIA field chief said he had advised the Boulder contact to "soft-pedal it with Smiley and in no way involve the agency."

By the end of April, 1969, Todorovich apparently was beginning to wonder if he knew all there was to know about Riha and any involvement he might have with the agency. He noted in a memo that the Riha disappearance "seems to have evolved from a domestic scrap" and, if of any official interest at all, "probably falls into the realm of the local police or the FBI."

But he added, a bit wistfully: "Certainly, unless there is a great deal more to the story than we know, it is not of concern to the CIA."

After the student newspaper at the university published an article on Riha in which an agency official in Washington was quoted as saying Riha was safe, Todorovich wrote to his superiors:

"The Denver field chief would like to think that our responses to local media kept the story from spreading. . . . In this context, I would like to feel we did our best to protect (CIA) interests."

"The scandal sheet at the University of Colorado is replete with sensationalist reporting; a record earned over the past few years, often taking potshots at one or another of the federal agencies. Few, if any, responsible citizens display interest in it."

congressional inquiries about Riha. "Maury told us that he simply wished to agree upon a common answer to inquiring parties interested in Riha," Todorovich said.

By now, Smiley, who had moved from the presidency of the University of Colorado to the University of Texas at El Paso, had been given assurances that Riha was "alive and well" and Smiley had visited the Houston office of the CIA to say that despite considerable pressure he was refusing to reveal the source of his information to the press.

He added, however, that if Riha was indeed alive and well he could see no advantage in hiding the facts from an "inquisitive press."

As information from the memos and other sources indicates, the origin of the "alive and well" information to Smiley was the CIA in Denver, which got its information from the FBI which, in turn, apparently got its information from another mysterious character in the bizarre drama, Galya Tannenbaum.

Mrs. Tannenbaum reportedly was the last person to have seen Riha, and a Todorovich memo dated Jan. 20, 1970, advised his superiors that "the grapevine has it that she has undue influence over Thomas Riha, whatever that may mean."

She subsequently was arrested on charges of forging Riha's name to a check and other documents but was declared legally insane and committed to the Colorado State Hospital in Pueblo, where she later committed suicide by swallowing cyanide.

By mid February, 1970, Todorovich had advised Washington that it "would not surprise me if our country cousins (the FBI) had not received their information (on Riha) from the same source all others apparently accepted—the statements of Galya Tannenbaum."

As word leaked out that an FBI agent had been the source of the "alive and well" statement to the CIA, which had passed it on to the university president, FBI officials, including the director himself, the late J. Edgar Hoover, tried in vain to persuade the CIA to reveal the identity of the FBI agent.

portant position," Todorovich wrote in another memo to Washington.

"The local Czechs, as our source puts it, believe Mrs. Tannenbaum may have become privy to Riha's intelligence functions and used that knowledge in an attempt to control Riha's relations with her."

Todorovich said the source reasoned that "Riha became fearful of that control, realizing that Mrs. Tannenbaum was a threat, and that in essence he was directed to leave via Canada for Czechoslovakia, entering Canada on a visitor's visa with a subsequent commercial flight to Prague."

Despite considerable local speculation that the disappearance was a simple case of murder following a domestic quarrel, the source told Todorovich the likelihood of Riha being dead was less than one in a hundred.

Subsequent memos from Todorovich accused a Denver Post reporter of trying "to embellish his reputation by continued concentration on Mrs. Gloria (Galya) Tannenbaum and Thomas Andrew Charles Riha" and assured his superiors he was continuing to stick to "no comment" on "this unfortunate affair."

Also on file now is a recent "fact sheet" on the case prepared by the CIA which summarizes:

"This matter is considered very sensitive by CI staff and other components of the agency. It appears that it lead to a disruption of liaison between the agency and the FBI in 1970."

"Although he have considerable information on Riha's background and from time to time have considered contacting him for intelligence-gathering purposes vis-a-vis Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, there has never been any agency contact with subject. The file does reflect that the agency had intercepted some letters to and from Riha through the HT Lingual Project."

The HT Lingual Project was a long-standing program of monitoring letters to and from the Soviet Union.

"We have no firsthand knowledge of Riha's

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"The scandal sheet at the University of Colorado is replete with sensationalist reporting; a record earned over the past few years, often taking potshots at one or another of the federal agencies. Few, if any, responsible citizens display interest in it."

"This does not, however, alter the fact that a story did appear which might have been suppressed had headquarters duty personnel coordinated with your local representative. . . . In any event, the remains appear to have been laid to rest."

As other reporters began to dig into the Riha story, Todorovich's memos assured Washington he was sticking to the CIA story that "we have no knowledge of Thomas Riha, would not know him if we bumped into him on the streets and that an active expression of CIA interest in Riha would be presumptuous since it is entirely out of our jurisdiction."

"We find it necessary on various but frequent occasions to repeat such statement to journalists, university administrators and the inquiring John Q. Public."

In mid January, 1970, Todorovich got a telephone call from John M. Maury, an agency official in Washington, who said he was getting

memo dated Jan. 20, 1970, advised his superiors that the CIA had no knowledge of Riha's disappearance. The memo stated that the CIA had no knowledge of Riha's disappearance and that the CIA had no knowledge of Riha's disappearance.

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Hoover became so angry over the incident that he broke off liaison with the CIA.

Another internal CIA memo that has been made public details the animosity between the two agencies, including the fact that an FBI official in Denver called a CIA official a liar and renewed his intent "to deny that the FBI had made any statement concerning Riha."

The same memo, prepared for then CIA Director Richard M. Helms, charged that Hoover "is unnecessarily pressuring CIA for the identity of the agent who talked to Todorovich" and that to reveal the FBI source "would most certainly damage his (presumably Todorovich's) standing in the community and hence the CIA image and mission in the Denver area."

By early June, 1970, the story took another twist when Todorovich met with an informant who told him that Riha had been involved in an espionage network in Colorado.

"The local Czech colony insists that Riha is not only in Czechoslovakia but is working for the Czechoslovak intelligence and has an im-

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The HT Lingual Project was a long-standing program of monitoring letters to and from the Soviet Union.

"We have no firsthand knowledge of Riha's disappearance," the fact sheet notes. "Our first knowledge came when (the Denver CIA office) was asked by two of their contacts at the University of Colorado, shortly after Riha's disappearance, for help in determining Riha's whereabouts."

"(Denver CIA) called the FBI and was told that in the opinion of the FBI, Riha was safe, that his disappearance was due to a family squabble, and the FBI was staying clear of the matter. This information was passed to the two University of Colorado contacts without revealing the FBI as a source."

"Subsequent to the disappearance, (CIA) received an unconfirmed report that Riha had been sighted in Czechoslovakia late in 1973 by a person who knew Riha. This information was passed on to the FBI in early 1974 without source names."

"In addition, (CIA) had received allegations from a member of the Denver Czech community that Riha had been involved with either the KGB (Russian intelligence) or the Czech STB, or both."

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